

Despite the terrible winter of 1779-1780, the civil war in the Hudson Valley intermittently flared up. Brig. Gen. John Paterson, commander of Fortress West Point, and Maj. Gen. William Heath, commander of the Hudson Highlands, feared "for the safety of every part" of the region. Fire was a nagging problem. The North Redoubt at West Point once again burned from February 1 until the 3rd, causing "considerable damage." Faced with the difficulties imposed by the weather and the routine of winter quarters, Heath wrote Paterson on February 5 that "I fear we are falling into a relaxed state, the Season and distance from the Enemy naturally tend to lull us into security — The Enemy will be practising every art and Strategem against us." He urged "uncommon precaution at every post."

While the British had no intention of attacking West Point that February, raids continued in the Neutral Ground of Westchester County. On February 3, a major skirmish took place near Joseph Young's house at Four Corners. A British force of 450 infantry and 100 mounted troopers attacked Lt. Col. Joseph Thompson's five companies of Connecticut troops (250 men) as they patrolled the area bounded by Bedford, White Plains, the Croton River, and the Hudson. Faced with the severe weather, Thompson had apparently violated Heath's instructions "never to remain long at any one place," presenting a lucrative target as he camped near Mt. Pleasant. In a hot action, the British routed the Americans, killing 14, wounding 37, and capturing 76 (including Thompson).

Congress took legislative action last fall to insure that such sacrifices will not be forgotten. On November 20, the 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution Commemoration Act introduced by Rep.

Maurice Hinchey passed both houses as part of the omnibus appropriations bill. Twenty-two co-sponsors (including fellow Valley Representatives Michael McNulty, Sue Kelly, John Sweeney, and Nita Lowey) joined Hinchey in his efforts in the House. Hillary Rodham Clinton and John Warner of Virginia introduced identical legislation in the Senate. The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College had been working with Hinchey and Legislative Director Paul Brotherton since 2002 to pass legislation to establish a program in the National Park Service to promote the anniversary celebration of the war that our state and region were so instrumental in winning.

When I testified before the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands last September, I argued that "the 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution Commemoration Act provides the means to fulfill our responsibilities as citizens

to preserve the past so that we may better understand the challenges of the present and future." Now that Congress has given the celebration its official seal of approval and made provisions for funding, the National Park Service can develop an educational program to help Americans understand and appreciate the continuing legacy of the American Revolution. The Hudson River Valley is very much a part of that legacy, and the Empire State has once again played the leadership role.

To learn more about the Revolution in the Hudson River Valley, log onto [www.hudsonrivervalley.net](http://www.hudsonrivervalley.net) and [www.hudsonrivervalley.com](http://www.hudsonrivervalley.com).

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Remembering the  
**Revolution**  
by Jim Johnson